UCLA Faculty Association

News and opinion from Dan Mitchell since 2009

Sunday, August 17, 2025

Straws in the Wind - Part 73

From Inside Higher Ed: *Republican governor Glenn Youngkin was overruled... as a Virginia circuit court ordered eight of his nominees be removed from their posts on three public universities' boards, the Associated Press reported and court records confirm. Nine Democrats on the state Senate Privileges and Elections Committee had rejected the nominees' appointment to serve the University of Virginia, George Mason University and the Virginia Military Institute during a special session in June. But Youngkin and his attorney general, Jason Miyares, instructed board chairs to proceed in welcoming the nominees as members, citing a provision in the state Constitution that says all gubernatorial appointees must be approved by the General Assembly. Miyares argued that because a committee, not the full General Assembly, rejected the nominees, that wasn't the final decision. But Fairfax Circuit Court judge Jonathan Frieden disagreed.*

...For now, the ruling serves as a win for the Senate Democrats who filed the lawsuit, arguing Youngkin's actions fly in the face of the state Constitution. Shaun Kenney, a spokesperson for the attorney general's office, however, said they intend to appeal...

Full story at https://www.insidehighered.com/news/government/state-policy/2025/07/30/judge-removes-youngkins-university-board-picks.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:20 AM No comments:

Labels: George Mason U, politics, U of Virginia, Virginia Military Institute

Saturday, August 16, 2025

Seeing is Believing - Now Where is the $$$ Follow Up?

Yesterday, we noted Gov. Newsom's seeming rejection of a deal with the Trump administration regarding UCLA, its frozen grants and other matters, and the demand for $1 billion. He also followed up subsequently with a video:

The Council of UC Faculty Associations

- Coalition of UC unions condemns Trump's attacks on the UC and the California economy
- Stand up for values in the face of Trump's $300 million cut to UCLA scholars
- Faculty leaders comment on UCB Chancellor Lyon's appearance before House Committee on Education and the Workforce
- CUCFA Opposes AB 715
- Pause Trellix and Form a Working Group to Explore Cybersecurity Solutions

Remaking the University

- The coalition of UC unions condemns Trump's attacks on the University of California and the Californian economy - 8/26/2025
- Liner Note 37. Chicago's Gift to Trump - 8/24/2025
- Liner Note 36. UCLA in the Extortion Machine - 8/10/2025

Higher Ed. News & Commentary

- Chronicle of Higher Education
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- California Faculty Association (NEA)
- UC-AFT

Topics

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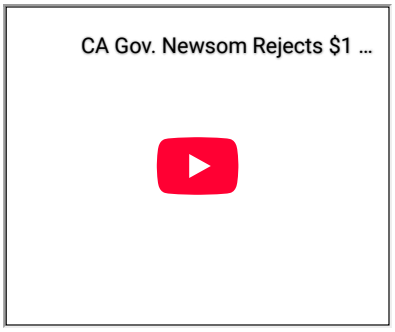

Or direct to https://www.youtube.com/shorts/VG4DRTdraPk.

Not mentioned in the video, however, is whether the governor and legislature have any plan to provide funding to UCLA to keep federally-supported research projects going until there is some resolution.

And, if you didn't get it, here is the latest chancellor's email. Note the boldface paragraphs:

Dear Bruin Community:

By now, you are all familiar with the challenges facing UCLA: the suspension of federal research funding, as well as the U.S. government's demand of $1 billion from our university.

I want to be clear: The costs associated with this demand, if left to stand, would have far-reaching consequences. The impacts to *society* are very real, as it could threaten our ability to conduct life-saving and life-changing research. But the impacts to *our university* are just as real, damaging our ability to carry out our public mission, harming the work and careers of our scholars and staff, and putting great strain on the budgets of departments and units across our institution.

Unfortunately, the challenges we now face come on top of a difficult few years for our university's finances. Even before the suspension of our research funding, we were undertaking efforts to reduce operational costs — instituting a hiring review process, limiting travel expenditures, and putting in place a 10 percent budget reduction for administrative units.

We will need to take additional steps — and make difficult choices — to balance our budgets, particularly if the university must operate without a significant portion of its research funding for a longer period. We are evaluating our options, and I have asked Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost Darnell Hunt and Vice Chancellor and Chief Financial Officer Steve Agostini to communicate updates to the Bruin community.

We are doing everything we can to meet this moment head on and restore UCLA's federal funding. I am routinely meeting with UC President Milliken, members of the UC Board of Regents, and the chancellors of the UC campuses to take a clear-eyed, strategic look at our options and find the best path forward for our community. We will keep our values and principles front and center in any decision we make. I know uncertainty about the future brings anxiety and fear for many in our Bruin family, and I commit to being in constant communication with you throughout this challenging period.

I also want you to know that this is a moment when *your* voice carries weight. The pride Bruins feel for UCLA is a force of its own, and we need our community to stand up for our institution and all the good it does in the world. I hope you will join me in advocating for UCLA by:

- Calling or writing your legislators to explain the value of UCLA's research so they can help us defend it
- Sharing stories about our world-changing research on social media using the #ResearchPowersProgress hashtag
- Sharing with us short testimonials about how UCLA research has affected your life
- Making a commitment to Stand Up for UCLA

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Contributors

- California Policy Issues
- Toby Higbie
- UCLA Faculty Association

In difficult times, we find strength in staying connected. UCLA's excellence comes from the collective dedication of its students, faculty, staff, alumni and friends — Bruins around the world united by a belief in the transformative power of education, research and service. By standing together, speaking with one voice and lifting one another up, we can protect our mission and ensure our university thrives for generations to come.

We are One UCLA.

Julio Frenk
Chancellor

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:30 AM No comments:

Labels: governor, politics, UCLA

Straws in the Wind - Part 72

From The Hill: *A congressional watchdog determined... that the Trump administration broke the law when it directed the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to cancel hundreds of research grants earlier this year. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) found the NIH violated the Impoundment Control Act when it canceled 1,800 grants in an effort to follow a series of executive orders aimed at cutting federal funding for diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives, according to a report from the agency.*

The 1974 law regulates how the president can cancel or delay federal funds that Congress has already appropriated.

The GAO also found the NIH violated the law when it awarded $8 billion less in grants between January and June of this year compared to the same time in 2024 to follow the Trump administration's executive orders...

Full story at https://thehill.com/homenews/5437295-nih-broke-law-by-withholding-funding-gao/.

From the Deseret News: *The University of Utah announced plans... to cut more than 80 courses and programs — ranging in academic fields from modern dance to mining engineering — as part of the strategic reinvestment process mandated by the Utah Legislature. The Board of Trustees at the state's flagship university approved the list of programs expected to be discontinued, pending approval by the Utah System of Higher Education and Utah lawmakers, according to a university release. Earlier this year, Utah Gov. Spencer Cox signed into law House Bill 265 — the divisive "strategic reinvestment" legislation requiring the state's eight public colleges and universities to reallocate millions to programs determined to be of highest value. The University of Utah is being asked to absorb the largest HB265 reallocation burden: More than $19.5 million.*

The state-imposed reallocation/reinvestment plans will occur over a three-year period. At least 30% of the reallocated dollars must be deployed by each school in fiscal year 2026. At least 70% in 2027. And 100% in 2028...

Full story at https://www.deseret.com/utah/2025/08/05/university-of-utah-cuts-programs/.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:20 AM No comments:

Labels: health care, politics, U of Utah

Friday, August 15, 2025

The Research Grant Filter

It should be noted that even if there is some kind of deal reached between UC/UCLA and the feds, future federal funding (grant renewals, new grants) will still be conditional on general filtering rules that would apply to any university and that have been recently adopted:

From a White House news release:

...Sec. 3. Strengthening Accountability for Agency Grantmaking. (a) Each agency head shall promptly designate a senior appointee who shall be responsible for creating a process to review new funding opportunity announcements and to review discretionary grants to ensure that they are consistent with agency priorities and the national interest. For the avoidance of doubt, this process shall not guarantee any particular level of review or consideration to funding applicants except as consistent with applicable law. As consistent with applicable law, this review process shall incorporate, at a minimum:

(i) review and approval of agency funding opportunity announcements by one or more senior appointees or their designees;

(ii) continuation of existing coordination with OMB;

(iii) to the extent appropriate to the subject matter of the announcements, review by designated subject-matter experts as identified by the agency head or the agency head's designee;

(iv) review of funding opportunity announcements and related forms to ensure that they include only such requirements as are necessary for an adequate evaluation of the application and are written in plain language with a goal of minimizing the need for legal or technical expertise in drafting an application;

(v) interagency coordination to determine whether the subject matter of a particular funding opportunity announcement has already been addressed by another agency announcement and, if so, whether one of the announcements should be modified or withdrawn to promote consistency and eliminate redundancy;

(vi) for scientific research discretionary grants, review by at least one subject matter expert in the field of the application, who may be a member of the grant review panel, the program officer, or an outside expert; and

(vii) pre-issuance review of discretionary awards to ensure that the awards are consistent with applicable law, agency priorities, and the national interest, which shall involve in-person or virtual discussion of applications by grant review panels or program offices with a senior appointee or that appointee's designee.

(b) Agency heads shall designate one or more senior appointees to review discretionary awards on an annual basis for consistency with agency priorities and substantial progress. Such review shall include an accountability mechanism for officials responsible for selection and granting of the awards.

(c) Until such time as the process specified in subsection (a) of this section is in place, agencies shall not issue any new funding opportunity announcements without prior approval from the senior appointee designated under subsection (a) of this section, except as required by law.

Sec. 4. Considerations for Discretionary Awards. (a) Senior appointees and their designees shall not ministerially ratify or routinely defer to the recommendations of others in reviewing funding opportunity announcements or discretionary awards, but shall instead use their independent judgment.

(b) In reviewing and approving funding opportunity announcements and discretionary awards, as well as in designing the review process described in section 3(a) of this order, senior appointees and their designees shall, as relevant and to the extent consistent with applicable law, apply the following principles, including in any scoring rubrics used to assess grant proposals:

(i) Discretionary awards must, where applicable, demonstrably advance the ***President's policy priorities.***

(ii) Discretionary awards shall not be used to fund, promote, encourage, subsidize, or facilitate:

(A) ***racial preferences*** *or other forms of racial discrimination by the grant recipient, including activities where race or intentional proxies for race will be used as a selection criterion for employment or program participation;*

(B) denial by the grant recipient of the ***sex binary*** *in humans or the notion that sex is a chosen or mutable characteristic;*

(C) ***illegal immigration****; or*

(D) any other initiatives that compromise public safety or promote ***anti-American values****.*

(iii) ***All else being equal, preference for discretionary awards should be given to institutions with lower indirect cost rates****.**

(iv) ***Discretionary grants should be given to a broad range of recipients rather than to a select group of repeat players.***** *Research grants should be awarded to a mix of recipients likely to produce immediately demonstrable results and recipients with the potential for potentially longer-term, breakthrough results, in a manner consistent with the funding opportunity announcement.*

(v) Applicants should commit to complying with administration policies, procedures, and guidance respecting Gold Standard Science.

(vi) Discretionary awards should include clear benchmarks for measuring success and progress towards relevant goals and, as relevant for awards pertaining to scientific research, a commitment to achieving Gold Standard Science.

(vii) ***To the extent institutional affiliation is considered in making discretionary awards, agencies should prioritize an institution's commitment to rigorous, reproducible scholarship over its historical reputation or perceived prestige****. As to science grants, agencies should prioritize institutions that have demonstrated success in implementing Gold Standard Science.*

(c) Nothing in this order shall be construed to discourage or prevent the use of peer review methods to evaluate proposals for discretionary awards or otherwise inform agency decision making, provided that peer review recommendations remain advisory and are not ministerially ratified, routinely deferred to, or otherwise treated as de facto binding by senior appointees or their designees. Further, nothing in this order shall be construed to create any rights to any particular level of review or consideration for any funding applicant except as consistent with applicable law...

Full release at https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/08/improving-oversight-of-federal-grantmaking/.

===

*Note the implication. Even if eventually there is no numerical cap on indirect costs, the higher the percentage proposed; the lower the probability of an award.

**Note the implication. Grant renewals for continuing research on a topic would seem to be discouraged. Ongoing "relationships" between the granting agency and a university or research group within a university would seem to be discouraged.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:30 AM No comments:

Labels: politics, UC, UCLA

Straws in the Wind - Part 71

From the Seattle Times: *Across the state, Washington's struggling public colleges and universities are laying off staff, raising tuition, cutting administrators and trimming programs. State budget cuts have landed at a time when severe cutbacks by President Donald Trump's administration, on top of inflation, are exerting financial stress on the schools. The administration's decision to broadly cut billions in federal research dollars will be a major revenue hit to the University of Washington. The cost of providing health care and other benefits to staff is rising. And international students — who help subsidize in-state students by paying higher tuition — are turning to Europe, Canada and other countries, although a full tally of international enrollment won't be available until the fall.*

With all of those challenges, "it would have been opportune to ask the state to step in" with extra money, said Ruben Flores, executive director of the state Council of Presidents, a policy and research agency for the state's six higher education institutions. But the Washington Legislature, facing deep financial challenges of its own, instead made an across-the-board cut of 1.5% to these higher education institutions for the next two years...

Full story at https://www.seattletimes.com/education-lab/uw-other-wa-colleges-face-big-money-problems/.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:20 AM No comments:

Labels: diversity, health care, U of Washington

Ready! Aim! Milliken!

Gavin Newsom
@GavinNewsom
You don't work with Donald Trump — only FOR Donald Trump.
Looks like Harvard has chosen to surrender.
Alan Garber must resign.
An absolute failure of leadership that will have demonstrable impacts to higher education across our country. He should be ashamed.
CALIFORNIA WILL NEVER BEND THE KNEE.
Michael S. Schmidt @nytmike · Aug 11
NEW and BREAKING: Harvard and White House are nearing a landmark legal agreement. It still needs sign off from Trump and senior Harvard officials. But we have the details on the emerging deal, including how it will cost Harvard $500 million. nytimes.com/2025/08/11/us/...
2:28 PM · Aug 12, 2025 · 1M Views

Source: https://x.com/GavinNewsom/status/1955381011988226422.

Although California and Massachusetts are on opposite coasts of the country, Gov. Newsom is telling Harvard president Garber to resign if he makes a deal with the Trump administration. That kind of cross-country demand might be less odd if we substitute UC president Milliken for Garber as the real target of the tweet above.

On the other hand, it does seem that UC is engaged in some kind of negotiation or at least discussion with the feds.

From the Harvard Crimson:

...When news first emerged that Harvard was considering a negotiated resolution, it sparked a fresh round of uproar from opponents of a compromise with the Trump administration. In recent weeks, Democratic politicians have worked to pressure the University against complying with the White House. Two weeks ago, 14 Democratic Harvard alumni in Congress threatened to investigate the University if it agreed to a settlement with Trump.

Newsom — a plausible contender to lead the Democratic ticket in 2028, who has alternately flirted with right-wing views and positioned himself at the vanguard of anti-Trump resistance — seemed eager to wade into the Harvard fight. On Tuesday, he joined the ranks of critics who argue that a prospective deal with Trump is equivalent to acquiescence.

"You don't work with Donald Trump — only FOR Donald Trump," Newsom wrote. "Looks like Harvard has chosen to surrender." Newsom's office did not respond to a request for comment, and University spokespeople declined to comment on the post...

Full story at https://www.thecrimson.com/article/2025/8/14/gavin-newsom-garber-resign/.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:05 AM No comments:

Labels: governor, Harvard, Milliken, politics, UC, UCLA

Thursday, August 14, 2025

Reinstate

From an email received yesterday:

Dear Bruin Community:

Last night, a federal judge ruled that the U.S. government must restore National Science Foundation (NSF) grants to UCLA. This ruling comes from a class-action lawsuit filed several months ago by researchers at UC San Francisco and UC Berkeley, not from the University of California itself.

The NSF has reinstated the UCLA awards that were suspended on August 1. Principal investigators will receive additional information from my office.

It is important to note that this does not apply to UCLA funding that has been suspended from the National Institutes of Health and Department of Energy. We are working to reinstate the additional suspended grants.

We remain committed to doing everything in our power to protect the interests of our faculty, students and staff — and to uphold the values and principles that define us. We will continue to be in communication with any updates.

Sincerely,

Roger M. Wakimoto

Vice Chancellor for Research & Creative Activities

Posted by California Policy Issues at 11:08 AM No comments:

Labels: politics, UCLA

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